



Section 2: Dialogue – Communicating with the Community



Most people do not know about the court system. They don't know where the courthouse is. The only time they have any [contact] is if they do get a traffic ticket or go to small claims court or are on jury duty. Many of them do not even know a judge. I think it's important for the judicial system, the people in the system, to go out and make an outreach into the community ... to talk to civic organizations such as religious organizations and ethnic and cultural groups and to other groups to make them better understand the importance of the judicial system and the support for the system.

—Ernest C. Ayala
American Association of Retired Persons¹

Court and community collaboration is an ongoing process of building new relationships based on effective two-way communication that includes both (1) the courts informing members of the community about the role of the courts and its activities and (2) the courts soliciting and listening to comments from the public about their needs for justice services.

Direct communication with community members is created through the use of public meetings, individual interaction inside the courthouse, court-sponsored education programs, and long-term collaborations between courts and communities. *Indirect communication* between the courts and their communities occurs through the use of many forms of media that inform and educate the public. This section of the handbook generally describes areas in which courts may improve both direct and indirect communication with the communities they serve. As an example, consider the following direct communication program from North Carolina.

Example

Pastor/Clergy Outreach. The Honorable Adam C. Grant, Jr., of Cabarrus County, North Carolina, began promoting public education about the courts upon becoming his county's chief judge. Among his various outreach efforts, Judge Grant helped to institute "Meet Your Judge and Law Enforcement" programs to specialized audiences. The first of these was local pastors.

¹ *Leading Justice Into the Future*, Keynote Video for Statewide Community-Focused Court Planning Conference. May 13–15, 1998.



Judge Grant recognized that members of the clergy are an influential group in informing the public about the courts. Development of this specific “Meet the Court” program began when Judge Grant contacted the director of pastoral care at a local hospital to ask him to make inquiries with the area pastors. Responses indicated that the clergy would be very interested in a day-long court orientation program.

The local ministerial association assisted with the planning and organization of the program by catering lunch for the pastors, as well as handling reservations and publicity. The program covered police and court procedures in domestic violence cases, drug and alcohol abuse cases, enforcement of child support decrees, and juvenile justice cases. Additionally, the presentation included a video tour of the jail, a discussion of prison issues, and a description of alternatives to incarceration for minor crimes. (See *Samples & Tools* for a sample agenda.)

The communication methods covered in this section include:

This Section

Community-focused court planning
Customer service
Community resource and ombudsperson
Citizen advisory committees
Media
Collaborative civic education

Information about additional public education programs and community collaboration projects are provided in more detail in Sections 4 and 5.

COMMUNITY-FOCUSED COURT PLANNING

In California, the Judicial Council, with the financial assistance of the State Justice Institute, developed a five-step strategic planning model for statewide community-focused court planning. This model, introduced at the May 1998 Statewide Community-Focused Court Planning Conference, encourages the development of local planning teams that include not only judges and court administrators, but also bar representatives, county government officials, and public members. These local teams are charged with working with the court and the community to develop strategic plans for the countywide courts.



The five steps in this strategic planning model

Step 1	Enabling community focus
Step 2	Articulating the courts' vision and mission
Step 3	Identifying emerging trends, stakeholder expectations, and key results areas
Step 4	Developing priority goals and measures of success
Step 5	Designing implementation strategies and monitoring success

Ultimately, adoption and implementation of the countywide court plan remain the responsibility of the courts, but the community is given the opportunity to offer insight throughout the process. The ways in which the courts communicate with the community in the planning process may include:

- Involving community members as representatives on planning oversight committees;
- Holding special focus group meetings with community groups and members on specific court-related issues;
- Creating ongoing community advisory committees that assist the courts in improving the administration of justice;
- Conducting organized outreach programs to the public and specific groups interested in judicial branch operations; and
- Soliciting public comments through court user surveys.

The aim of this first-of-its-kind project is to form a collaboration between the courts and their communities that will encourage new forms of partnerships and communication to benefit both partners.

For more information about the Community-Focused Court Planning model, a copy of the conference binder, conference videotapes, and planning training materials, contact Jack Urquhart at 415-865-7654; jack_urquhart@jud.ca.gov.



Examples of Collaborative Community Planning

Communicating with the community in the context of court planning uses the same general techniques regardless of the size of the jurisdiction involved. Two examples of court planning efforts with high levels of community involvement are provided below. The significant difference between the two is the scale of the efforts needed to involve the large numbers of people who make up the community in urban environments.

An Urban Model: The Florida Community Outreach and Involvement Effort²

Impetus

The impetus for court planning in the state of Florida came from a constitutional mandate. Florida's voters amended the state constitution, requiring all three branches of government, including state agencies, to get involved in a planning process. The constitutional amendment required each branch to develop a system of accountability and quality management. These plans were to be the foundation for performance-based budgeting for the year 2000.

Planning Committee

Florida's Supreme Court responded to the mandate by creating its Judicial Management Council, which in turn created a steering committee for strategic planning. The planning committee originally included an appellate court judge, a presiding judge at the trial court level, a superior court judge, a municipal court judge, a state senator, a state representative, a public defender, a private attorney, and three public members.

The charge of the committee was to undertake a major branch-wide planning effort. First on the agenda was a survey of court planning methods in Nevada, Arizona, Michigan, Virginia, and California. Next, the committee examined future trends affecting court systems. Then the steering committee reviewed Florida court evaluation reports from the last 15 years. From this information, the committee members identified stakeholders, compiling a list of 50 subgroups for inclusion in planning outreach endeavors.

Visioning Conference

Next, the committee held a "Visioning Conference" to engage people in deciding what the ultimate vision for Florida's court system should be. The visioning process facilitated a common viewpoint about what the court system was to represent. The criteria for the visioning process were as follows:

- Conclusions had to apply to any area of the law;
- Conclusions had to represent a shared view regardless of constituency; and
- Conclusions had to reflect the committee's mission.

One hundred people from around the state attended the "Visioning Conference," and all three branches of government were represented, as were members of the public and private sectors.

² The Florida statewide planning effort is suggested as a model for urban planning because of the similarities in size, demographics, and other factors faced by large urban courts in California.



An Urban Model: The Florida Community Outreach And Involvement Effort (continued)

Consulting The "People"

After the conference, staff reviewed their notes and drafted a plan. The plan was then taken to the people of Florida via an outreach effort consisting of:

- Nine regional workshops around the state attended by 400 participants, each of whom was personally invited by the state's chief justice, including attorneys, court service providers, teachers, clergy, media representatives, and other private citizens;
- Public opinion research telephone survey to 1000 households, and
- Seven regional focus group meetings.

In all cases, participants were asked to identify the main issues facing the court system and to suggest strategies for improving the courts.

Members of the committee also solicited the same information from Supreme Court committees, Family Court steering committees, and court technology user committees. The committee sought advice on court reform from professional groups, including the state attorneys' association, the clerks' association, the controllers' association, the judicial secretaries' association, and the judges' association.

The Strategic Plan

Using all this information, the committee drafted its strategic plan, which was sent back to the participants of the original nine regional workshops for review and revision. After incorporating the resulting changes, the plan was submitted to the Judicial Management Council, which reviewed and signed off on the plan.

The next step in creating the strategic plan was the Supreme Court's acceptance and approval of the plan in July 1998.

A Rural Model: Franklin County Massachusetts Futures Lab

Reinventing Justice

In 1992, the Massachusetts Chief Justice's Commission on the Future of the Courts published its report, "Reinventing Justice 2022," which set out a new image of justice and the system that provides it. Projecting 30 years into the future, the report envisions a system of justice that is user oriented, with multiple options, trusted by the public, equally effective for all people, and led by a judiciary with professional management skills.

Creation of a "Futures Lab"

Inspired by the report and dissatisfied with the present system, two residents of Franklin County, Massachusetts, Hon. Thomas T. Merrigan and Attorney Diane H. Esser, met together. They developed a plan to change the local paradigm of justice from court focused to community focused. Their underlying belief was that the community's experience and opinion of the courts are of primary importance; without public confidence in the judicial system, the courts lose their relevance, and the public's opinion of government in general is tainted. They submitted a proposal to then Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Paul J. Liacos, asking that Franklin County be designated a "laboratory" county with approval to experiment. Chief Justice Liacos authorized the creation of the Franklin



A Rural Model: Franklin County Massachusetts Futures Lab

	<p>County Futures Lab Task Force, to be co-chaired by Judge Merrigan and Ms. Esser; their assignment was to engage the community in a dialogue about improving the administration of justice in Franklin County and to propose new programs.</p> <p>The 48-member Franklin County Futures Lab Task Force was created in the spring of 1994 and included community members and professionals in the legal system. Their first task was to plan four town meetings for the fall of 1994, one in each geographic quadrant of the county. Approximately 500 residents attended the town meetings and gave clear testimony about the public's dissatisfaction with the status quo.</p>
Town Meetings and an Action Plan	<p>All those attending the town meeting were invited to a day-long workshop in December 1994 to set priorities and establish working groups to make recommendations about particular issues. About 100 people participated in the workshop, and ten working groups were created, based on individuals' interests. Each working group met for the next three months and developed a proposal that identified the problem and suggested a solution.</p> <p>In March 1995, the task force discussed the proposals and the issues raised. From the dialogue, the task force identified 12 recommendations and presented them in September 1995 to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in the report "Moving to a Preferred Future: A Reinventing Justice Action Plan." The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court approved the recommendations, which set in motion a second generation of effort.</p>
Pilot Projects	<p>By 1998, a number of pilot projects emerged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A law-related speakers bureau; • An information/referral desk; • A substance abuse intervention program; • A delay reduction program; • A juvenile diversion program; • An appropriate dispute resolution program; and • Community justice committees to work with the courts on restorative justice projects.
Ongoing Initiatives	<p>Ongoing initiatives of the Franklin County Futures Lab Project involve: developing a corps of community volunteers to support the efforts of the various projects and of the courts; providing educational outreach programming for the public about basic legal issues, restorative justice, and resolving disputes; building ongoing evaluations into the way the court conducts its business that would include regular focus groups on various court-related topics; identifying sustainable funding sources for the pilot programs that prove successful; and continuing to define permanent inlets for the community voice into the administration of justice in Franklin County.</p> <p>As a result of the success of the ongoing court and community collaboration that has been achieved in Franklin County, three new reinventing justice projects have been established by the Supreme Judicial Court in three other counties in Massachusetts.</p>



AN EMPHASIS ON CUSTOMER SERVICE

No aspect of public access is more important than customer service. Providing expeditious, competent, and courteous assistance over the phone and at the public reception areas is absolutely imperative to positively influencing the public's perception of the courts. If we establish public access as a courtwide core value and if we articulate this value to the employees, it is likely that they will exceed both our and the public's expectations.

—Arthur Sims, Court Executive Officer
Superior Court of California, County of Riverside³

Customer Service Training

One of the most important ways that the courts can demonstrate their sincere concerns for the needs of the public is by ensuring that their employees provide effective and courteous services to the courts' customers, including jurors, witnesses, victims, pro per litigants, and all others who use the services of the courthouse and the courts. Excellence in customer service is held as one of the most important measures of success in the private sector. Extrapolating that success to the public sector, especially the judicial branch, requires a conscious commitment to serving the needs of the public while assuring that the independence of the courts is protected and maintained.

Customer service training resources available. Two resources are offered here to assist courts with a systematic approach to improving customer service.

- The American Judicature Society has developed *Serving the Public: A Curriculum for Court Employees*. This manual provides practical knowledge court employees must have to maintain excellence in customer service. The curriculum helps court employees identify who their customers are, both internal and external, analyze customers' needs and expectations, and respond to challenging service situations. The manual includes clear instructions for court managers and presiding judges, as well as professional educators, to teach the curriculum modules. (For a copy of this manual, contact the American Judicature Society at 312-558-6900, ext. 147.)
- The Superior Court of California, County of Alameda, has developed a customer service training program that is used for all court employees. (Contact Sheila Tolbert, 510-208-3980, for a description of the program, a copy of the training video, and other materials.)

³ *Leading Justice Into the Future*, Keynote Video for Statewide Community-Focused Court Planning Conference. May 13–15, 1998.



Customer Service Surveys and Public Opinion Polls

For purposes of this handbook, a distinction is drawn between customer service surveys and public opinion polls. Customer service surveys help identify the needs of court users and assess the quality of customer service. Public opinion polls are usually questionnaires administered by telephone or in person to assess the level of familiarity of the public with the courts and the quality of court services. Each of these two communication methods is discussed separately below.

Customer service surveys. Assessing the quality of service is critical to maintaining positive customer relations. Customer service surveys should evaluate all programs and services. Information obtained through these surveys can be used to ensure efficient, effective, accessible, and consistent service.

The potential audience for the use of such surveys includes all people using court services and persons serving on jury duty. Ordinarily these surveys are produced as questionnaires and either offered to court users at service counters, conducted as one-on-one interviews by court staff, or distributed directly to jurors. Survey contents include questions regarding promptness, courtesy, efficiency, and information and a section for comments and suggestions.

Public opinion polls. Assessing the attitudes and opinions of the community in which the court resides is critical to understanding the emphasis the court should place on court and community collaboration. As mentioned earlier, enlisting the aid of a local college or research facility to conduct an opinion poll may serve to strengthen a connection with that educational member of the community, provide an educational opportunity for the poll conductors, significantly decrease the costs of conducting a poll (compared to the cost of a private consultant), and provide valuable information to the court.

The following suggestions are offered to assist the courts in effectively using customer service surveys and public opinion polls.

Survey/Poll Preparation

- Review existing sample surveys available from the Trial Court Performance Standards and other resources. (See information on Trial Court Performance Standards on the following pages and see sample survey in *Samples & Tools* at the end of this section.)
- Develop questions that will provide information about how well the customer service program is meeting goals and objectives.
- Produce the survey or poll in a format that allows for easy compilation of results.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure that the survey is available in all languages used by the customers of the court. Seek out local ethnic organizations or interpreters willing to assist the court in translating the customer service surveys into languages other than English. Identify members of staff or volunteer collaborators who can assist with compiling the results of the non-English survey responses.
Conducting the Survey/Poll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Determine the period of time in which the survey or poll will be conducted, i.e., either periodically (e.g., once a year, once a quarter) or on an ongoing basis. For the latter, determine how often the results will be compiled. ➤ Make customer service surveys available to all court users. Experience has shown that those courts that actually have designated staff conduct the surveys in person with customers receive greater response than those that only make written surveys available to customers on counters or at information stations. Be sure to use staff or volunteers who speak the language to disseminate the non-English-language surveys. ➤ Ensure that the sampling process developed for conducting a public opinion poll will represent the diversity of the court's community population. ➤ Encourage customers to complete the survey and return it to a specific location. Make completing and returning the questionnaire as easy as possible for the customer. ➤ To ensure unbiased results, designate secure areas where customers can return questionnaires. Do not allow court employees to distribute survey forms to customers selectively. Limit employee access to the survey response "box" to ensure that all responses are received and their results compiled.
Using the Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide for a method of reviewing and making use of customer feedback results. ➤ Compile the results on a periodic basis and track those results over time. ➤ Use the results in management meetings to determine operational areas in which changes may be necessary. If there are legal reasons that certain practices cannot be changed to respond to significant customer concerns, prepare a written explanation of these limitations to train staff and share with customers.
Sharing the Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In addition to the surveys, create a way in which the periodic results of the surveys are made available to the customers and demonstrate how prior feedback from customers has resulted in improved service. Help customers see that their input can actually make a difference. ➤ Share the results of changes made with the media so the community at large is aware of the changes the court is making in response to its concerns.



Survey resources available. Several resources for sample customer service surveys are offered below.

Survey cards. The Superior Court of California, County of Ventura, recognizes customer feedback as an invaluable resource for improving services. “We Value Your Opinion” survey cards were developed to better analyze performance in the areas of promptness, courtesy, efficiency, and information. Customers are invited to offer suggestions and feedback regarding staff. Printed in English and Spanish, the survey cards are available at all counter locations. At least once a year, volunteer staff use the cards to conduct exit interviews in public areas. (See *Samples & Tools*; contact: Margie Borgon-Miller, 805-654-3620.)

Pretraining customer service survey. At the Superior Court of California, County of Alameda, in Oakland, a pretraining customer service survey is an integral part of the court’s customer service training program. This survey establishes the benchmark for assessing posttraining and ongoing customer service delivery. (Contact: Sheila Tolbert, 510-208-3980.)

Juror exit questionnaire. (See Section 5B, *Juror Education/Appreciation*.)

Trial Court Performance Standards. A set of court assessment surveys is available through the Trial Court Performance Standards.

**Trial Court
Performance
Standards
(TCPS):**

**A Brief
History and
Overview**

In 1987, in recognition that state court systems were being stretched beyond their capacity and that court personnel were experiencing fatigue and burnout in attempting to deal with the significant increase in drug-related cases, an ambitious program was initiated by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), U.S. Department of Justice, and the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). The program’s objective was to increase the capacity of the nation’s trial courts to provide fair and efficient adjudication and disposition of cases. The program’s goals included the development of a set of standards and an accompanying measurement system that would define and measure effective trial court performance.

The TCPS program of action includes:

- A common language for the description, classification, and communication of court activities.
- A conceptual framework for understanding and improving court performance.
- A means for court self-assessment, self-improvement, and accountability to the public.

A hallmark of TCPS is its dual emphasis on the systematic assessment of a trial court’s performance as an organization serving those who use the court and on the use of these findings to improve that performance. TCPS is not intended to



evaluate the performance of individuals; instead, it views the court as a system of processes and tasks that are intimately interlinked. The collective work of the court involves all individuals who perform administrative court functions.⁴

In California, the Los Angeles Municipal Court conducted a three-year court assessment project that used all 68 trial court performance standards. Based on that experience, the Judicial Council is currently sponsoring a Trial Court Performance Standards Pilot Project in the courts in Napa, Long Beach, Yolo, and South Orange to determine the feasibility of using a streamlined version of the standards that is less labor intensive.

For more information about Trial Court Performance Standards, contact the Bureau of Justice Assistance Clearinghouse at 800-688-4252 or the National Center for State Courts at 804-253-2000. For more information about the California pilot projects contact Francine Collier at the Administrative Office of the Courts at 415-865-7612.

A COMMUNITY RESOURCE AND OMBUDSPERSON

As noted in Section 1, there is an increasing lack of public understanding of the courts. Often members of the public enter a courthouse without knowing where to report for jury duty, where to pay their ticket, what is expected of them in court, or what types of pro per services might be available to them. Members of the public may find the courthouse, judges, and court staff to be intimidating and remote. Court users also often need information about other services outside of the courthouse to which they are referred by court personnel. The concept that responds to these concerns and needs has been called the “multidoor” courthouse to indicate that justice services are no longer fully contained within the walls of the traditional courthouse.

Information desks. In response to the expanding needs of court users, courts can begin, and in some places have begun, to address the basic information needs of the public who enter their courthouse for the first time by providing an information desk. This desk can provide basic courthouse information to the public such as:

- Where do I find the clerk’s office?
- Is there a children’s waiting room? Where is it?
- Where do I report for jury duty?
- Where can I get lunch?
- In which courtroom is my case being heard?
- Where do I pay my traffic ticket?

⁴ Bureau of Justice Assistance. *Fact Sheet — Trial Court Performance Standards and Measurement System*. Washington: Nov. 1995. p. 1.



An information desk, though extraordinarily useful, is limited to the “where” of the courthouse.

Ombudspersons. Once the first step of providing an information desk is accomplished, courts should consider designating a “community resource and ombudsperson” who would be more thoroughly trained than the information desk staff and be capable of referring people to the resources they need and resolving customer complaints where possible.

As a resource person this individual would not dispense legal advice but, rather, would assist court patrons in determining what resources are available to them. The resource person (whether a volunteer or paid staff) would answer more of the how and why of the judicial system, including questions such as:

- How do I file a small claims case?
- What is mediation? How do I find a mediation service?
- Where and how do I file for a restraining order?
- Is there someplace I can get help as a litigant without a lawyer?

As an ombudsperson, this person would investigate complaints, report findings, and assist in achieving fair resolution to customer service difficulties. Through the public comment it received, the task force found that many court users felt that they had not been appropriately treated in their dealings with the court and court staff. An ombudsperson would not have authority to resolve underlying cases, but could serve to investigate, attempt to address, and record concerns of the community regarding the service provided by the courts.

A model for such a process exists in informal complaint procedures related to gender and race bias that have been designed and implemented in courts throughout California pursuant to Section 1 of the Standards of Judicial Administration, adopted in 1997. Examples of such procedures exist in Alameda, Santa Clara, and Sacramento courts. In Sacramento, the Gender Fairness Procedure was made an addendum to local rules of court in June of 1993. The procedure reads as follows. (Such procedures could be made more general to account for other kinds of customer complaints.)

This complaint procedure is intended to address conduct by attorneys, litigants, judges and courtroom personnel arising within the physical confines of the courthouse and courtroom over which a presiding judge and/or a sitting judge has authority or influence. The procedure relies on the judge or presiding judge to respond to issues of gender bias that occur within the judge’s courtroom or within the courthouse and are within the jurisdiction of the judge or presiding judge.

1. Two liaisons (ombudspersons) will be appointed, one male, one female. The selection of the liaisons is critical to the success of the program. Liaisons may be drawn from retired judges or respected members of the legal community. The



- bench should be involved in the selection of the liaisons.
2. Complaints should be made through the Executive Director, an officer, or one of the liaisons of the Santa Clara Bar Association.
 3. The complainant may select one of two liaisons. If no preference is indicated, the cases will be assigned on an alternating basis.
 4. After a liaison has been selected, the complainant will meet with the liaison. To ensure confidentiality, the nature of the complainant's complaint and identity will remain confidential and shall not be disclosed by the liaison or the Santa Clara County Bar Association under any circumstances, unless required by law, without the express written consent of the complainant.
 5. If the complaint involves a situation in the court involving a judicial officer, the liaison may, only upon the express written consent of the complainant, set up a meeting directly with the judicial officer from whose courtroom the complaint arose or against whom the complaint has been made. If this meeting is held, and satisfactorily resolves the complaint, then no further action is necessary. If the judicial officer refuses the meeting or the outcome of the meeting with the judicial officer is not deemed satisfactory by the liaison and complainant, the presiding judge will be so notified, with the express written consent of the complainant.
 6. The liaison will determine if the case warrants notifying the contact person (the presiding judge) at the courts, but shall contact the presiding judge only with the express written consent of the complainant.
 7. If notification of the presiding judge is deemed appropriate, the liaison will meet with the presiding judge to inform him/her of the complaint, but only with the express written consent of the complainant.
 8. If so notified, and if permitted by legal and contractual requirements, the presiding judge may elect to set up a meeting with the judicial officer from whose courtroom the complaint arose or against whom the complaint has been made, the liaison, and him or herself.
 9. The liaison will report to the complainant the results of the meeting.
 10. Throughout the entire procedure and to the extent possible, all participants will maintain the confidentiality of the identity of the participants and the nature of the complaint.

The procedure does not involve a formal complaint to the Commission on Judicial Performance. Should a complainant wish to file a formal complaint, he or she must file it directly with the Commission.

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Another way the courts can ensure effective communication with the community about its needs is through inclusion of community members in groups charged with providing advice on court operations.

Citizen advisory committees provide advice on specific issues of interest to the court and/or are involved in ongoing planning efforts of the court. Potential participants for such advisory groups can be drawn from local chambers of commerce and other



business groups, community leaders and organizations, attorneys, existing government committees, and the community at large. The advisory committee should be created so that its membership consists of judges and court staff, residents of the community at large, and members of targeted groups.

Consider the following steps when organizing a citizen advisory committee

Step 1	Assess the needs of the court and the community's concerns about the justice system.
Step 2	Assess community resources in terms of volunteers, allied organizations, professional expertise, information, and existing government committees.
Step 3	Recruit volunteers. Contact potential members by letter. Outline the issue(s), the objective in addressing the issue(s), and how the recipient can be involved and invite the recipient to join the committee. Inform potential participants in advance about the ethical limitations faced by judges and the courts in general. (See <i>Samples & Tools</i> for a sample letter to prospective members.)
Step 4	Convene the advisory committee to develop a mission statement, goals and objectives, agenda, and calendar for the year.
Step 5	Incorporate into the ongoing agenda a periodic review of goals and objectives, activities, progress, and obstacles to determine any need to change direction, focus, activities, and/or membership.

Examples of Citizen Advisory Committees

Citizen advisory committees or panels can be created for many different purposes. Some examples are set forth below.

Example 1	<p><i>Court administration and management groups.</i> Interagency collaboration maximizes the use of resources and provides the expertise needed for addressing the concerns of specific groups. The Citizen's Advisory Council for Service Excellence in El Dorado County is a group of citizens serving as advisors to and a sounding board for the court's management regarding service, technology, and management issues. Possibly the first of its kind in the country, this model offers a cost-effective solution to courts that want to improve operations and service to the public. Issues involving cases before and decisions of the judges in their judicial capacity do not come within the council's charge.</p> <p>Council members are asked to keep alert for service-provision approaches, technologies, and management approaches that would enhance the court's effectiveness and efficiency and to bring them to management's attention during or between meetings. In some cases, the court's managers need additional assistance to learn about something that has been recommended or to determine exactly how it might operate in a court context. The court's management shares</p>
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	Possible new approaches with the council and seeks its feedback on the feasibility of the approach being considered and whether it seems likely to produce significant and positive improvement for customers. (Contact: Alex Aikman, 530-621-7453.)
Example 2	<i>Community service referral panels.</i> The Court Referral Advisory Committee in Orange County matches volunteers for court-referred community service with different nonprofit organizations that need volunteer help. The committee consists of judges and administrators from the courts and representatives from Caltrans, the coroner's office, and other agencies. (Contact: Kari Sheffield, Juvenile Court Administration, 714-935-6600.)
Example 3	<i>Community court advisory committees.</i> The Citizen Advisory Council (CAC) of the Norfolk Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court (Virginia) advises and assists the court in designing programs and services to meet court needs and serves an advocacy and lobbying role on behalf of the court for legislation affecting the court and its jurisdictional areas. The membership of the CAC is drawn entirely from community resource organizations. The CAC acts as a connection between the court and the broader community as well as a conduit of information about community needs that impact the court. The CAC also has a formal role in developing innovative programs that address, for instance, the processing of child abuse and domestic violence cases and, on behalf of the court, inspects facilities to which the court orders juveniles. (Contact: Betty Wade Coyle, 757-6625-3182) (See Section 4 for more information on advisory committees and community input.)
Example 4	<i>Court-instituted court monitoring programs.</i> In 1975, a New York nonprofit organization called the Fund for Modern Courts (FMC) developed a program to give New York citizens a powerful voice in how their courts are run. The concept, known as court monitoring, was simply to form groups of volunteers around the state, representing a cross-section of their communities, to observe court proceedings on a regular basis. Monitors assess the courts from the point of view of outsiders to the system and recommend improvements to make them more efficient and user friendly. The New York courts and other jurisdictions consider this 23 year experiment to have proven highly successful at creating an ongoing and productive dialogue between citizens and their judiciary, making the courts more accountable to the communities they serve, and producing tangible improvements in the courts. ⁵ The FMC's court monitoring program has been duplicated in Chicago, Washington, D.C., and in other locations sponsored by organizations such as the League of Women Voters. (Contact: 212-575-1577)

⁵Gary Brown, "Court-Community Collaboration: Citizen Court Monitoring," *Judicature* (1997) vol. 80, no. 5, pp. 219-220.



MEDIA

There is a need to build the relationship with journalists who cover the courts regularly even before they are needed for a court program. The media has a huge influence over public perception but there is also a perception that people get when they walk into the courthouse. There is a false impression that having good media, good stories in the newspaper about the courts, can erase all of the negative experiences that people have with the courts either on jury duty, paying a traffic ticket, or in family law court. The media cannot help correct everything. We can only report what's going on in the system. Thousands of people enter courthouses every day throughout the state and you've got to address their issues. Make the experience good for them when they walk into the courthouse because if that one experience is bad you can forget about them reading stories about judges going out to schools and things. That is not going to change the public perception of the courts.

—Jean Guccione
*Los Angeles Daily Journal*⁶

“[T]he judicial branch of government depends primarily upon an understanding public to support its processes and decisions. . . . A good relationship between the courts and the public opinion—molding news media is essential to a healthy, independent system of justice.”⁷ Members of the media are in search of news and comment from the courts to share with the public. The court supports this interest because of its need for the news media to assist in the education of the public. The courts best served by this relationship with the media are those that recognize that, within limits, the media can act in partnership with the courts. Courts benefit from a fully informed media, including reporters who understand the judicial process, the limits on their reporting, and the role of judicial officers. It is the court's responsibility to meet the needs of the news media and develop a partnership based on respect and a mutual desire to keep the public informed of court activities.

A relationship with your local media can provide benefits at times of success and at times of difficulty. An empathetic media can help your court to communicate with the local community. The Los Angeles Superior Court has been nationally recognized for its response to the media needs surrounding the trial of O. J. Simpson and other prominent cases. That court has developed media kits to assist reporters in understanding the details of the law and limits on their reporting for each case of interest. (Contact: Jerianne Hayslett, public information officer, at 213-974-5227.)

⁶ *Leading Justice Into the Future*, Keynote Video for Statewide Community-Focused Court Planning Conference, May 13–15, 1998.

⁷ Pickerell, A. G. *The Courts and the News Media*. San Francisco: California Judges Association (1993) p. v.



Examples of Collaborative Media Relationships

Example 1	<p><i>Maricopa media relationship.</i> In the Maricopa County Superior Court in Phoenix, Arizona, the court tackled the media relationship by developing a Media Advisory Committee and publishing information pamphlets for the media. The Media Advisory Committee works to ensure cooperation between the court and news organizations on issues such as cameras in the courtroom, timely access to court-related information, and the court's desire to bring attention to "institutional stories." The pamphlets provide easily accessible, up-to-date information on these topics. (Contact: Karen Arra, Public Information Officer, 602-506-7570 or www.maricopa.gov/supcrt.)</p>
Example 2	<p><i>Local television and radio access and programming.</i> In the San Francisco and San Mateo courts, individual judges have offered their skills to local public access television programming and print publications. In San Francisco, Hon. Carlos Bea writes a program and appears weekly on a Spanish language public access television program, <i>Conozca la Ley</i> (Know the Law). He also writes a fortnightly column in a Spanish newspaper with a circulation of 60,000, <i>Nuevo Mundo</i>. (Contact: Hon. Carlos Bea, 415-415-5187.)</p> <p>The Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, participates in the <i>Legal Currents</i> program, a weekly half-hour program produced by the College of San Mateo, KCSM-TV. Judicial officers participate in forums on topics such as immigration, family law, DUI, juvenile, criminal, and civil matters. The program provides direct telephone call-in on legal questions and issues. The program has received outstanding comments from the community through telephone feedback and letters. (Contact: Peggy Thompson, 650-363-4766.)</p>
Example 3	<p><i>Bench/bar/media committees.</i> The Superior Courts of California in Orange and Ventura Counties sponsor bench/bar/media committees. The purpose of these committees is to promote a spirit of cooperation between the bench, bar, and media, while addressing matters of mutual concern. The meetings generally occur on a monthly basis. (In Orange, contact: Jeannette McSkane, 714-834-5316. In Ventura, contact: Beth Hodgson, 805-654-3271.)</p>
Example 4	<p><i>Public information officers.</i> Public information officers are employed in Los Angeles Municipal Court, Los Angeles Superior Court, and the Superior Court of California, County of San Diego. In San Diego, the court's public affairs officer handled 234 inquiries from print and electronic media in 1996, up 19 percent from 1995, to ensure a fast, accurate response from the appropriate court spokesperson. The court issued two public service announcements and 17 news releases on topics such as court coordination, the opening of new facilities, and the selection of a new jury manager. Ongoing media outreach includes the placement of judges on television and radio programs and is a major component of the court's comprehensive public information program established in 1989.</p>

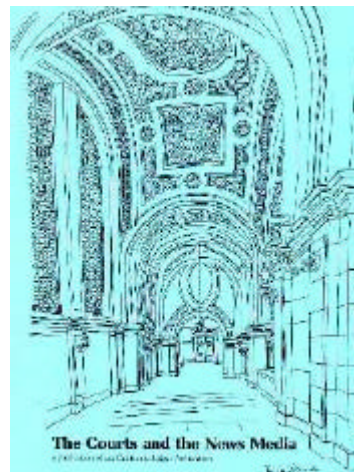


(Contacts: Los Angeles Municipal, Marcia Skolnik, 213-974-6358; Los Angeles Superior, Jerianne Hayslett, 213-974-5227; San Diego Superior, Marilyn Laurence, 619-531-4484.)

Media Resources Available

The California Judges Association manual. The California Judges Association (CJA) has developed a manual, *The Courts and the News Media*, as an outreach tool to the news media. It is targeted at reporters and includes basic information on the courts, court proceedings, and relevant information for reporting on the courts. Chapters cover these topics:

- California courts
- Federal courts
- Pretrial civil procedure
- Pretrial criminal procedure
- Trial procedure
- Legal research
- Access to the courts
- Access to juvenile court
- Cameras in the courtroom
- Access to meetings and records
- Invasion of privacy
- Subpoenas to journalists
- Defamation



To order this book, contact CJA by calling 415-495-1999. It is a well-designed reference tool for court public information officers dealing with the media or for reporters new to legal reporting desiring an inclusive reference source.

AOC fact sheets. The Administrative Office of the Courts Public Information Office has developed media relationships on a statewide basis and has produced “fact sheets” and other publications on important issues affecting the courts and their administration. Current fact sheets include:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ➤ Access and Fairness Advisory Committee | ➤ Judicial Council Committees |
| ➤ Administrative Office of the Courts | ➤ Jury System Improvement Project |
| ➤ California Drug Court Project | ➤ Profile of the Judicial Council of California |
| ➤ California Judicial System | ➤ Proposition 220: Voluntary Trial Court Unification |
| ➤ Cameras in Court | ➤ “Three strikes” Summary |
| ➤ Change of Venue in California | ➤ Training and Education |
| ➤ Court Interpreters | |
| ➤ Judicial Assignments in California | |



Other AOC publications, in addition to special reports, include:

- *Annual Report*
- *Court News* (bi-monthly)
- *Court Statistics Report* (annual)

Courts can obtain these fact sheets and publications by calling 800-900-5980. Much of this information is also available online at the California Courts Web site, www.courtinfo.ca.gov.

COLLABORATIVE CIVIC EDUCATION

As you develop your relationship with community groups and as you work with youth and schools, you may encounter requests for law-related education tools. Or as you begin to talk with community groups and individual members of the community, you may begin to consider the possibility of encouraging greater civic education for the community.

Education about the justice system varies widely across the state. The California Board of Education recently adopted new academic standards for history and social science that improve the focus on law-related matters in Grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, and 12. Although these proposed standards emphasize learning about government in general, the actual focus on law and the court system is limited. This limitation establishes both a strong need and a great opportunity for the courts to become involved with local schools to help California's children and adults gain a greater knowledge and understanding of the judicial system.

Some basic elements of the justice system that need to be more effectively communicated via public education include:

- The rule of law
- Basic principles of civil justice
- Basic principles of criminal justice
- Independence of the judiciary as a branch of government and in judicial decision making
- The role of attorneys as officers of the court and in prosecution, plaintiff, and defense counsel roles
- The role of judges and court staff
- The role of jurors
- The role of law enforcement in relation to the courts
- The role of appellate courts
- The distinction between state and federal courts
- Judicial appointment process and nonpartisan judicial elections
- Basic court procedures and documents, especially in family and juvenile law matters
- Methods of alternative dispute resolution, including learning conflict resolution skills



To improve public understanding of the courts, it is important that the courts take action on a local level. Every student, teacher, or school group with whom the courts interact has the potential to serve as an educator of their peers. An example of a Florida program to address civic education needs and some potential resources for court-education collaboration are provided on the following pages. Further examples of civic education programs conducted by the courts are included in Section 5: *Courts as Educators – Model Public Education Programs*.

Teaching the Teachers: The Florida Model

Problem

Stung by a discouraging statewide survey indicating that two-thirds of its citizens claimed to have no knowledge about the court system, Florida's Supreme Court set about to become an educational provider for the state courts.

Florida requires its high school students to take a semester of instruction in American government, including study of its state court system and a full year of American history. Those high school courses, however, had not produced a citizenry that was knowledgeable about the court system, at least not according to the survey conducted by the Florida Judicial Management Council. Part of the problem was that there was no agency that provided secondary schools with topical information about the work of Florida's courts.

This was changed by creating the Florida Justice Teaching Institute (JTI) in 1997 to increase public knowledge about Florida's judiciary. JTI's strategy from the beginning has been to promote teaching about the court system in the state's secondary schools and, in particular, to provide teachers with available information in formats that would support and encourage classroom study about the courts.

Three Components

JTI, in its inaugural year, created a program having three connected components:

- JTI Teacher Fellows Program;
- JTI local workshops; and
- Internet Delivery of Topical Teaching Materials.

These components complement each other. The Teacher Fellows Program provides intensive training about the judicial branch to a cadre (25 each year) of secondary school teachers. The teacher fellows, through local workshops, share their knowledge with colleagues and advertise the availability, over the Internet, of innovative teaching materials about the court system. JTI, for its part, provides classroom-ready teaching materials, particularly in its Case of the Month format over the Internet.

JTI's annual budget is less than \$20,000, almost all of which is used to pay expenses to teachers participating in the Teacher Fellows Program. The teaching materials were prepared and are updated by the Florida Supreme Court and its research staff.



Teaching the Teachers: The Florida Model

	<p>Annually, JTI selects 25 secondary school teachers by competitive application to come to the state capital for intensive training on the structure and operation of Florida's courts.</p> <p>The seminar lasts for three and one-half days and includes meetings with appellate justices and trial judges, interactive simulations based on real cases, court observation, and small-group discussions.</p>
Teacher Fellows Program	<p>The course of study includes:</p> <p><u>"Trail of Justice."</u> The teachers visit nearby Leon County Courthouse to learn the various stages of criminal proceedings. In its 1998 inaugural program, JTI involved the teachers in role playing an actual case that had been recently argued to the Florida Supreme Court. <i>Harrell</i> was a tourist robbery case. When the victims returned to their native Argentina, the defendant argued that their trial testimony could not be received via satellite television without violating the defendant's rights of confrontation and due process. The teachers at the Leon County Courthouse acted parts in a mock bail hearing, argued a mock suppression motion, and saw film clips from the actual <i>Harrell</i> trial.</p> <p>Returning to the Supreme Court, the teachers reviewed the lawyers' briefs and then argued and decided the <i>Harrell</i> appeal, after which they viewed a video of the actual appellate argument and read the opinion subsequently issued by the court. The teachers also sat in on an actual appellate argument presented to Florida's high court. At each step along the "Trail of Justice" the teachers are provided with materials which explain the particular court proceeding and the legal standards applicable to the court's decision.</p> <p><u>ADR Procedures.</u> JTI also educates the teachers on the alternate dispute resolution procedures available in Florida's courts.</p> <p><u>Internet Training.</u> JTI, using volunteers from the court's research staff, educates the teachers in the legal research materials that are available in law libraries and increasingly important on the Internet. The JTI volunteers guide the teachers in a hands-on review of law-related Web sites and explain the Web sites that JTI created to provide curriculum materials for schools.</p>
Program Goals	<p>The JTI program is ambitious. It anticipates that, after completing the program, in addition to other accomplishments, teachers will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the structure and jurisdiction of the court system and communicate it to their students; • Describe a legal proceeding from preliminary motions through appellate review (the "Trail of Justice"); • Describe the purpose of the Bill of Rights; • Describe the purpose of conflict-resolution mechanisms and describe alternate dispute resolution techniques and peer mediation; and



Teaching the Teachers: The Florida Model

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of and use legal research resources on the Internet, especially JTI's Case of the Month materials, to create school lesson plans.
JTI Local Workshops	<p>JTI seeks to leverage the knowledge gained by its teacher fellows by having them arrange and conduct in their own areas small group workshops to educate other teachers about Florida's courts.</p> <p>Local JTI workshops are designed to reach other teachers, particularly those teaching civics, social studies, and history courses, in three-hour sessions. Planners are urged to seek school administration approval for in-service credit. The local workshops are encouraged to ask judges and lawyers from the area to be guest speakers, and the chief justice has recommended participation to Florida's judges. JTI provides handout materials for use at the workshops and takeaway materials that the teachers may use in their classrooms.</p>
Use of the Internet	<p>JTI develops case materials offered through the Internet to teachers. In its Case of the Month, JTI provides materials on a particular pending case set for argument before the Supreme Court. For that case, JTI provides the record from the trial court, the parties' briefs before the appellate court, and other supplemental material appropriate for an understanding of the legal issues. The oral argument on the case is broadcast live via satellite statewide. A video and audio of the argument are also made available on the Internet.</p> <p>Teachers who have integrated Case of the Month into their lesson plans have been complimentary. One said, "This is a wonderful activity because it incorporates many learning skills—critical thinking, organization skills, writing, and verbal and cooperative learning."</p> <p>At present, JTI is planning to develop six new Case of the Month studies each year. The task of preparing the case materials for Internet broadcast is rotated among the research staff attached to Florida's seven justices. As the Case of the Month materials are drawn from a case already pending and set for oral argument before the court, the extra burden to prepare the study materials is not substantial.</p> <p>Six different Cases of the Month are already accessible from the Florida Supreme Court Web site at: www.flcourts.org/courts/supct/cyber or www.firn.edu/supct/cyber/.</p>
Contact Information	<p>Anne Fitch Florida Supreme Court 850-488-8624</p>



Resources for Educational Collaboration

Resources for law-related education have been developed by several nonprofit groups and the American Bar Association. The resources listed below are not exhaustive. They are intended to offer easy-to-access tools and ideas for educational partnerships.

The Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, community-based organization dedicated to educating America's young people about the importance of civic participation in a democratic society. Under the guidance of a board of directors chosen from the worlds of law, business, government, education, the media, and the community, CRF develops, produces, and distributes programs and materials to teachers, students, and public-minded citizens all across the nation.

CRF staff includes teachers and educators, lawyers and athletes, community organizers and fundraisers, designers, writers, and editors. They provide technical assistance and training to teachers, coordinate civic participation projects in schools and communities, organize student conferences and competitions, and develop publications in the following areas:

- Law and government programs and materials which focus on how groups and individuals interact with the issues, institutions, people, and processes that shape our laws and government.
- Civic participation programs and material which bring to life the rights and responsibilities of active citizenship by challenging young people to explore their community and plan and implement projects that address community needs.
- Business in society programs and materials which focus on the role that business issues, ethics, and decision making play in the social, economic, and civic life of our society.

For more information, contact the CRF at:

Constitutional Rights Foundation
601 South Kingsley Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90005
213-487-5590
Fax 213-386-0459
www.crf-usa.org

The Center for Civic Education is an independent nonprofit corporation based in California, with a network of program coordinators in every state in the country.

The mission of the center is to promote informed, responsible participation in civic life by citizens committed to values and principles fundamental to American constitutional democracy. The center administers a wide range of critically acclaimed curricular, teacher-training, and community-based programs. The principal goals of the center's programs are to help students develop (1) an increased understanding of the institutions



of American constitutional democracy and the fundamental principles and values upon which they are founded, (2) the skills necessary to participate as effective and responsible citizens, and (3) the willingness to use democratic procedures for making decisions and managing conflict. Ultimately, the center strives to develop an enlightened citizenry by working to increase teachers' and students' understanding of the principles, values, institutions, and history of constitutional democracy.

The center's programs and curricula feature cooperative-learning and problem-solving activities, enhance critical thinking and communication skills, and focus on contemporary issues and current events.

The center has its roots in the interdisciplinary Committee on Civic Education formed at the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1964 to develop more effective curricular programs in elementary and secondary civic education. In 1969, the center became affiliated with the State Bar of California, which sponsored the statewide Law in a Free Society project. In 1981, the State Bar established the Center for Civic Education as an independent nonprofit organization.

The center's headquarters are in Calabasas, California, with an office in Washington, D.C. Since its origin in 1969, center materials have been used in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, the trust territories, and many foreign countries, including Argentina, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, the Czech Republic, Ethiopia, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Israel, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Poland, Romania, and Russia.

For additional information on the Center for Civic Education, contact:

Center for Civic Education
5146 Douglas Fir Road
Calabasas, CA 91302-1467
818-591-9321
Fax 818-591-9330
www.civiced.org

The Coalition for Justice is a California-based nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of and support for the state courts. Established in 1993 to ensure the excellence of California's judicial system in an era of dwindling financial resources, the coalition is:

- Developing programs that enable courts to be more responsive to the communities they serve while they help build a public constituency for the courts;
- Assembling a broad-based coalition of individuals and organizations dedicated to keeping California's courts at the forefront; and
- Serving as an information resource for individuals and groups seeking to support and improve our judicial system.



For additional information on the Coalition for Justice, contact:

Coalition for Justice
11901 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 623
Los Angeles, CA 90025
310-737-1112
www.coalitionforjustice.org

The mission of the **American Bar Association's Division for Public Education** is to increase public understanding of law and its role in society. The programs are designed to provide people with accurate and balanced information about law, helping them develop skills, attitudes, and values needed to be responsible and participating citizens. To achieve this mission, the Division for Public Education conducts programs, develops resources, provides technical assistance and information clearinghouse services, presents awards, and fosters partnerships among bar associations, educational agencies, and others.

The ABA Public Education Division created the National Law-Related Education Resource Center (NLRC) in 1991 to collect and disseminate information on law-related education (LRE) programs and resources, substantive legal topics, funding sources, and teacher and resource leader training opportunities. Today, the NLRC serves K–12 schools, college and university liberal arts faculties, and the general public. NLRC can direct interested individuals to magazines, newsletters, technical assistance papers, anthologies, syllabi, bibliographies, videotapes, software, posters, journalists' guides, law client products, law career information, and hundreds of law-related educational products and services.

The Division for Public Education offers a variety of educational materials about the law, for:

- Adult public education
- Community outreach by lawyers and judges
- College instructors
- K–12 teachers
- LRE program developers
- Journalists and others
- Mock trials for K–12 students
- Middle and high school students

For further information, contact:

American Bar Association
Division for Public Education
541 North Fairbanks Court
Chicago, IL 60611
312-988-5735
abapubed@abanet.org
www.abanet.org/publiced/home.html



Samples & Tools

✓ **Sample: Meet the Courts and Law Enforcement (Pastor's Edition) Agenda**

Source: Cabarrus County, NC

✓ **Tool: Customer Service Survey**

Source: Superior Court of California, County of Ventura

✓ **Tool: Citizen Advisory Committee, Letter to Prospective Members**



Sample: Meet the Courts and Law Enforcement (Pastor's Edition) Agenda

Source: Cabarrus County, NC

AGENDA

- 9:00–9:30 a.m. Welcome and Discussion of the Court System in North Carolina followed by Question and Answer Period
Hon. Adam C. Grant, Jr.
Chief District Court Judge, 19A Judicial District
- 9:30–10:30 a.m. DWI Discussion Including Video Arrest of a Drunk Driver Followed by a Breathalyzer Demonstration
Line Sergeant J. A. White
North Carolina Highway Patrol
- 10:30–10:50 a.m. Break
- 10:50–11:50 a.m. District Criminal Court in Session followed by Question and Answer Period
Hon. Clarence E. Horton, Jr.
District Court Judge, 19A Judicial District
- 11:50–12:10 p.m. The Role of the District Attorney
Hon. D. Kenerly
District Attorney, 19A Judicial District
- 12:10–12:30 p.m. The Role of the Defense Attorney
Mr. James D. Foster
Attorney at Law
- 12:30–1:30 p.m. Lunch
- 1:30–2:00 p.m. Cabarrus County Jail Video Tour and Discussion of Prison Issues
Hon. Robert M. Canady
Sheriff of Cabarrus County
- 2:00–2:30 p.m. Child Support Enforcement
Hon. Estus B. White
Clerk of Superior Court, Cabarrus County
- 2:30–3:00 p.m. What Every Pastor Should Know About Drugs
James C. Woodard, Supervisor
Southern Piedmont District, North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation
- 3:00–3:15 p.m. Break
- 3:15–3:45 p.m. Police Procedures in Domestic Violence Cases
Chief Paul D. Brown
Kannapolis Police Department
- 3:45–4:05 p.m. Alternatives to Incarceration: Probation and House Arrest
Mr. Robert Little, Assistant Branch Manager
Branch C, Adult Probation and Parole
- 4:05–4:30 p.m. Superior Court Issues
Hon. James C. Davis
Senior Resident Superior Court Judge, 19A Judicial District
- 4:30 p.m. Adjourn



How Are We Doing?

WE VALUE YOUR OPINION

Our employees are expected to serve the public courteously, promptly, and efficiently. We would like to know if we are succeeding, and how we can do better.

Please take a moment to complete this questionnaire. Your answers are important in our continuing efforts to improve services.

You may return this form to the clerk's office, or deposit it in the after hours payment bin on the front steps.

Thank you for your assistance.

[INSERT name], Court Executive Officer

Court Logo

[INSERT name of court]

Tool: Customer Service Survey (continued)
 Superior Court of California, County of Ventura

Back

1. Today's date: _____ Time of your visit: _____
2. Reason for visit: _____
3. Please rate the following for today's visit:

	Outstanding	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor
Promptness	1	2	3	4	5
Courtesy	1	2	3	4	5
Efficiency	1	2	3	4	5
Information	1	2	3	4	5

3. What type of matter were you here for today?

Traffic Criminal Civil Small Claims Other

4. How long did you wait in line? _____ minutes.
5. Do you have any suggestions to improve our service?

6. If a member of our staff was especially helpful, please let us know so that we may show our appreciation.

7. How would you rate our service overall?

Outstanding Good Average Fair Poor

OPTIONAL — Please print the following information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____



Tool: Citizen Advisory Committee, Letter to Prospective Members

Date

xxx xxx xxx
xxx xxx xxx
xxx xxx xxx

Dear Mr./Mrs./Hon. Xxxxx:

I am writing to invite you to sit on the (name) Advisory Committee for the (name) Court to (purpose). Among the issues we will be addressing are: (name of issues). (A sentence about the importance of the committee to the court and the community). We have selected you as a potential member of the (name) Advisory Committee because of your exemplary experience/skills as (insert qualification for committee).

As a member of the advisory committee you will be asked to participate in the development of a comprehensive response to (insert issues/purpose again). The committee is expected to: (list activities). At our first meeting on (date) we will be developing our mission statement, goals and objectives, and an agenda for the next six months.

I hope you will seriously consider this invitation to join us in (state purpose). I will call you next week to answer any questions. In the meantime, don't hesitate to call me at (insert phone number) if you would like additional information.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Xxxx Xxxxxxx

